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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 001028

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DOE PASS TO ADEALVAREZ AND PWILLGING
CIA PASS TO TCOYNE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2017
TAGS: EPET, ENRG, PTER, SA
SUBJECT: JOINT WORKING GROUP ON CRITICAL ENERGY
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION: SAUDI READOUT AND NEXT STEPS;
AL-QAEDA LOSING POPULARITY BY TARGETTING OIL FACILITIES

REF: RIYADH 873

Classified By: ECONOMIC COUNSELOR BOB SILVERMAN
FOR 12958 1.4 B, D, AND E

1. (U) This is an action request for S/CT, DS/ATA, and
DOE/Office of Energy Reliability. Please see paragraph
three.

Summary

2. (S) In a May 15 meeting with Ministry of Interior (MOI) Chief of Staff Saad al Jabri, Joint Working Group (JWG) Co-Chair Dr. Saud al-Semari, MOI Industrial Security Director Khalid al-Ageel, Econ Counselor and Energy Attache reviewed next steps on critical infrastructure protection. Two items are imminent on the JWG calendar: a June 15 visit to Saudi Arabia by a JWG expert team to assess maritime security at key facilities; and a June 10 two-week Design Basis Threat training class led by Sandia Labs, for MOI and other security personnel. Following implementation of these programs, we hope to be in a position to schedule the fourth JWG meeting in Jeddah in July 2007. Al-Jabri also described an April 14 Saudi TV broadcast of four al-Qaeda suspects who confessed on air to getting Bin Laden's order to attack Saudi oil facilities. Attacking the country's main source of wealth is losing al-Qaeda popularity in the Kingdom, al-Jabri concluded. End Summary.

2. (C) Al-Jabri said the April 30 meeting was a valuable exchange; we was pleased that we are planning to reschedule the threat assessment brief so as to coincide with the Gulf Security Dialogue meeting here in Riyadh on May 23. Following are next steps we agreed to:

US Embassy Riyadh Next Steps

--To avoid delays for Saudi JWG members traveling to the US for JWG meetings or associated training, Embassy Riyadh is working with the MOI to obtain 2-year multiple entry visas for all Saudi JWG members and affiliated security representatives from parastatal companies of significant interest, such as Saudi Aramco and SABIC.

--Mission Saudi Arabia will work to program visits in June for the JWG maritime security expert team, and the DOE/Sandia Labs Design Basis Threat training class. Please see action requests below.

Action Requests for Washington Agencies

--For DOE/Sandia Laboratories: In line with the MOI's request, please provide full program information and preparatory reading material for the Design Basis Threat training program proposed for June in Riyadh. The MOI would also appreciate receiving information on necessary qualifications or background for program participants, to assist MOI in selecting appropriate participants for the training program.

--For JWG Maritime Security Experts: Please indicate what sites and organizations you would like to visit, so MOI can coordinate with MOI constituent elements, MODA and Aramco to

arrange these site visits.

--For S/CT: Please send to Economic Counselor draft minutes from the April 30 JWG meeting in Washington, so we can finalize them with Saudi co-chair.

--DS/ATA: MOI and US Mission Saudi Arabia request that DS/ATA Officers Soler and Maloy be available to provide additional

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assistance to the MOI's efforts to design a Facilities Securities Force (FSF) guard training curriculum. DS/ATA please advise if Officers Soler and Maloy could travel to the KSA in the near future to assist with this key task.

--DS/ATA: Please advise on the outcome of a proposal to provide federal police training for MOI officers.

Saudi TV Airs Al-Qaeda Confessing to Attacks on
Energy and Water Facilities, including Ras Tanura

4. (S) Al-Jabri told Econ Counselor he would send him a video copy of a Saudi TV broadcast, which featured four al-Qaeda members arrested in April 2006 confessing to plans to attack Saudi Arabian oil facilities. Press reports indicate the suspects planned to attack Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia's largest oil export facility, and Jubail City, a major industrial complex. They claimed they were waiting for authorization from Osama bin Laden to carry out the attacks, which they said would be "equal to the September 11 strike."

5. (S) Al-Jabri stated the al-Qaeda members also mentioned attacks on desalination facilities. (Note: The Jubail City desalination plant and associated power plant provide more than 90 percent of Riyadh's water, pumped uphill for 300 kilometers. The US Mission considers the Jubail desalination plant and associated power infrastructure to be critical infrastructure, an attack on which would be a significant strike against Riyadh's ability to survive and function as the capital city. End note.)

6. (S) The TV-aired confessions were followed by a very critical broadcast commentary by leading Saudi clerics against al-Qaeda and bin Laden, including a well-known Sheikh named al-Diri'ya. Al-Jabri explained that al-Qaeda appears to be losing popular support in Saudi Arabia by targeting the oil industry, the nation's source of wealth. The religious sheikhs are starting their attacks on al-Qaeda here based on this, he said. Economic Counselor compared the situation to that of Egypt after the 1997 terrorist attacks in Luxor, which resulted in al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya losing support in Upper Egypt because terrorism had damaged Egypt's tourist-dependent economy, and caused hardship for many

citizens. Al-Jabri agreed that Saudi public was gradually coming to realize its economic well being was threatened in the same manner by al-Qaeda. He added that the sheikhs were also attacking Al-Qaeda's religious credentials, for instance, Bin Laden's misinterpretation of the Prophet Mohammed's last words about driving non-Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula.

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=====CABLE ENDS=====